

# TEN TIPS FOR WRITING SUCCESSFUL SCRIPT:

*(Excerpted from "A short-cut to Hollywood Success" by Linda Comgill, Creative Screenwriting 05/11/2004)*

Below is a list of tips to consider before you shoot your short film.

1. Know who you're making your film for. If you're making it for yourself, that's who you have to satisfy. If you're making it as an entry into the industry, your film needs to work dramatically as well as technically. Competition is stiff.
2. The longer the story, the better the film has to be. Length comes down to what the story dictates. But if a film is over 15 minutes, it really has to be great to keep people watching. I can't tell you how many boring "short" films I've seen because directors can't figure out what they can cut to make it better.
3. Write the script you can produce. Don't write a script with production values you can't achieve.
4. The best ideas are simple. Focus on one main conflict, then develop and explore it in surprising ways.
5. Set up your film in the first 60 seconds. If you're writing a ten-minute (10 page) movie, you can't take the first five pages to introduce your characters before getting to your conflict. Establish your conflict as soon as possible.
6. Make sure conflict escalates. Know what your character wants (the goal) and what's preventing him from getting it (the obstacle), and make sure your audience understands it, too.
7. Try to develop the conflict in one main incident as the set piece of your project. Many great short films develop the conflict in one incident to great effect, exploring character in ways feature films rarely do because they rely more heavily on plot.
8. If your film is less than five minutes, one type of conflict might be sufficient to satisfy your audience. But if your film is over five minutes, you're going to need to various obstacles or complications for your hero to face.
9. Just because your film is short doesn't mean it's impossible to have an effective midpoint and reversal. Anything that keeps your audience from guessing your ending is an asset.
10. Make sure your ending is the best thing about your great film. Your payoff is what you're leaving the audience with, and it's how they're going to remember you.